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## The Art of Civilization: Museum Enemies in the Nineteenth Century

Obviously, by visiting an art museum and contemplating a heap of amazing altar pieces, none of us will deplore the painful odyssey of these paintings *entering* the museum, the loss of their wings or at least their eternal standstill, their alienation from any liturgical sense, or even the dispersion of single panels all over the art-loving world. Museums are the temples where we hold our breath.<sup>1</sup>

If we had in mind all these things while passing a row of such splendid pieces of art, or if we were exposed to a nearly original situation which puts the beholder into an unfavorable position of dim light and poor visibility, wouldn't we feel immediately an ebbing of pleasure?

The art historian Carol Duncan called what happens inside public art museums "civilizing rituals."<sup>2</sup> Of course, she did not mean the civilization of the *artworks* standing here at the same level, in uniform and neutral good lighting, reduced in their statement to 'art'. She meant the *people* who would have undergone a civilizing process in the art museum. But if we look at the barbaric act by which the museums in the nineteenth century got their things, we will not see these spaces as the best places for a strategy of civilization.<sup>3</sup>

However, the fact that few voices criticizing the genesis of museums remained in the twentieth century is a sufficient demonstration of their successful 'civilizing strategy': they offered to the works, wherever they came from, a new and sheltered home. Only sensitive natures like Paul Valéry perceived the amassment of artworks as a torture to their eyes.<sup>4</sup> Maurice Blanchot, in his essay *Le mal du musée* of 1957, talked

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Peter Bürger, Säle, bei deren Betreten man den Atem anhält, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (June 29, 2012), p. 59. The author referred to a decision of the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz to move the Old Master paintings from the Berlin Gemäldegalerie. Only after the protest of more than 20,000 petitioners on August 21, 2013 did the *Stiftung* announce that it had abandoned its plans.

<sup>2</sup> Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals. Inside Public Art Museums*, London: Routledge, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Martin Warnke, Geburt des Museums aus dem Bildersturm – Distanz und Nähe historischer Kunst, in: Bazon Brock, Christian Bauer (eds.), *Musealisierung als Zivilisationsstrategie*. Arbeitsheft zum Symposium am 24. 11. 2009 in der Temporären Kunsthalle auf dem Schlossplatz in Berlin, Weimar: VDG, 2009, pp. 86–89.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Valéry, The Problem of Museums [1923], in: Jackson Mathews (ed.), *The Collected Works of Paul Valéry*, vol. 12: *Degas, Monet, Morisot*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1960, pp. 202–207.

about his shocking psychophysical reactions – a sickness and dizziness face-to-face with a large number of master works. And he concluded: “Surely there is something insuperably barbarous in the custom of museums. How did things come to this?”<sup>5</sup>

## Between “aesthetic churches” and “castles of art” – Karl Hillebrand

That question – *How did things come to this?* – was confronted already by Karl Hillebrand, a German writer of cosmopolitan essays and correspondent to several international newspapers, who settled in Florence in the 1870s. His pamphlet *Zwölf Briefe eines ästhetischen Ketzer's* (*Twelve letters of an aesthetic heretic*), published anonymously in 1874, was well received by all those conservatives who longed for a social and artistic renewal.<sup>6</sup> What was ‘heretical’ in his twelve fictive letters was, firstly, his damnation of the aestheticism of art and, secondly, of the scientific revolution in the field of the arts over the last hundred years. He added to this, mainly, his condemnation of “the theories of Winckelmann and his followers, the French Revolution and its aftermath, museomania and the democratization of art.”<sup>7</sup> In the end, this democratization was nothing other than what Blanchot called the “insuperably barbarous in the custom of museums.”

The term *heretic*, however, had a specific meaning in the context of aesthetics: In 1797, Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder and Ludwig Tieck had published a very influential book, *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (*Effusions from the Heart of an Art-Loving Monk*). They compared “the enjoyment of the nobler artworks to prayer,” suggesting that reception of art should be isolated from external, profane factors:

Works of Art fit into the common stream of life as little as the thought of god. [...] Picture galleries [...] should be temples where we admire, in calm and silent humility and heartfelt, exalting solitude, the great artist [...] and where we remain in long, uninterrupted contemplation of their works, warming ourselves in the sun of the most enchanting thoughts and emotions.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *Museum Sickness*, in: Id., *Friendship*, translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997, pp. 41–49, p. 45 (Maurice Blanchot, *Le mal du musée*, in: *Nouvelle Revue Française* 5.52 (1957), pp. 687–696, p. 692). All translations, if not otherwise indicated, are my own.

<sup>6</sup> [Karl Hillebrand,] *Zwölf Briefe eines ästhetischen Ketzer's*, Berlin: Robert Oppenheim, 1874 (repr. in: Id., *Völker und Menschen*, Strassburg: Trübner, 1914, pp. 323–397); Cf. Martin Gaier, *Heinrich Ludwig und die 'ästhetischen Ketzer'*. *Kulturpolitik, Kulturkritik und Wissenschaftsverständnis bei den Deutsch-Römern*, Cologne: Böhlau, 2013, pp. 165–240.

<sup>7</sup> Hillebrand 1874 (as in note 6), p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, Ludwig Tieck, *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* [1797], ed. by Martin Bollacher, Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005, p. 67; Cf. Bernd Auerochs, *Die Ent-*

It was against this romantic vision of an ‘aesthetic church’ with the artist as divine priest that the ‘aesthetic heretics’ antagonized. They shared the opinion that a work of art remained alive only in the ‘common stream of life’, and that images remained silent and lonely in an atmosphere of humility and solitude.

The other function of the art museum, however, as the new educational institution, also raised Hillebrand’s objections. The Humboldtian concept of a guided education in taste had been marginalized by the burgeoning field of art *history*. Now it was about the acquisition of a teleological evolution of art. In an essay in 1865, the art historian Herman Grimm, for instance, described elbowing his way through a large crowd in the halls of the Berlin Old and New Museum: “Both buildings together, with the originals here and the copies over there, virtually form a castle of art (*eine Kunstburg*). If you are able to conquer it spiritually you will receive immense treasures.”<sup>9</sup> What was now important was to mark a distinction in the face of the crowd of *Bildungsbürger* and he could reveal it on the location with his expert’s eye – the knowledge that he already had conquered his ‘castle of art’: “In an hour the expert will slide with his eyes over the development of the entire visual arts.”<sup>10</sup>

Hillebrand had such a bad experience with these gliding eyes at the Vienna World Exhibition in 1873 that he made them the reason for his booklet. Some artists called his attention to the problem, especially the young sculptor Adolf Hildebrand whose works were displayed not at the exhibition hall but far away from the hustle, in the Austrian Museum for Arts and Crafts. Hillebrand, who demonized the celebrated *Tribuna* of the Uffizi as the origin of this decadence, distinguished the most important issue in the contexts of creation and destination of an artwork. He wrote that the “barbaric act” of the so-called “temples of art” was revealed fully in the new context in which the images were brought here, either in a jumble of genres or – worse – according to art-historical methodology: “The gallery is like a chronological table, a map, a systematic hand book – you almost would prefer the alphabetical order of a dictionary.”<sup>11</sup>

What Hillebrand looked for in a gallery, that is “atmosphere”<sup>12</sup> (*Stimmung*), he couldn’t find anywhere:

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*setzung der Kunstreligion*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006; Annette Gilbert, ‘Die ästhetische Kirche’. Zur Entstehung des Museums am Schnittpunkt von Kunstautonomie und -religion, in: *Athenäum. Jahrbuch der Friedrich Schlegel-Gesellschaft* 19 (2009), pp. 45–85.

<sup>9</sup> Herman Grimm, Peter von Cornelius, in: Id., *Neue Essays über Kunst und Literatur*, Berlin: Dümmler, 1865, pp. 70–104, p. 70.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Hillebrand 1874 (as in note 6), pp. 29–30.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

Hang a picture of second or third rate, which we pass in the museum with indifferent and saturated eyes, in an isolated niche or in a study - we will enjoy it better than a Rafael, surrounded by hundreds of satellites, each vying for our attention, and what's more, each of which has a right to vie for our attention.<sup>13</sup>

Hillebrand sharpened his skepticism of museums in dealing with like-minded members of his 'sect', among them artists who, like him, lived in Italian exile, for example Heinrich Ludwig, Hans von Marées, or Adolf Hildebrand but also private scholars like Theodor Heyse, Conrad Fiedler, or Adolph Bayersdorfer.

Some of them pursued nothing less than an idealistic art and social reform following Schiller and Humboldt. According to Ludwig, the order of the day was not the best enjoyment of a work of art through its optimal presentation but "that the visual arts and their care would have a high impact on the health of the mind and on the civilization of man."<sup>14</sup> He was convinced that the idea of the original function of an artwork declined as a result of the "art-philological disease" called by him "scientific museomania" (*wissenschaftliche Museomanie*). Only works displayed in public space could really have a civilizing impact.<sup>15</sup> Hillebrand also wrote in one of his 'heretical letters' against the removal of artworks from the flow of daily life:

But if you want to do something for the 'people': put your artworks out into public space, such as Giovanni Bologna's *Sabine Woman* or Michelangelo's *David* – today they carry him away as well, to bury him under the pretext that he had become too delicate! It may be that the daily glance of the passing *popolano* will linger on the beautiful shapes, sucking their contours and making them his own, without having noticed it really. But don't put them in art prisons that look more similar to railway stations than to palaces and that the 'people' never will enjoy.<sup>16</sup>

The extent of the effect of these discussions on the German museum reform of the 1890's cannot be discussed here. But Wilhelm Bode's well-studied concept of style and period rooms, with which he sought a painterly, recontextualizing arrangement of art, was a direct result of these attacks on Museomania and the so-called democratization of art.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> Heinrich Ludwig, *Über Erziehung zur Kunstübung und zum Kunstgenuss* [1874], (*Studien zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 78), Strasbourg: Heitz, 1907, p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>16</sup> Hillebrand 1874 (as in note 6), p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> For further discussion see Gaier 2013 (as in note 6), pp. 223–231. On the reform: Alexis Joachimides, *Die Museumsreformbewegung in Deutschland und die Entstehung des modernen Museums, 1880–1940*, Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 2001.

## Roots of Museum Enmity – Quatremère de Quincy

In the expanding history of museums, only a few studies are concerned with contemporary voices that criticize the museum.<sup>18</sup> Their opinions are too strange to our thought: It is not the museum where the artwork *accomplishes* its autonomy and freedom; here the artwork *loses* its autonomy by being placed with other works that are largely irrelevant to it. Instead of an eternal and timeless life of the work of art as we see it today, the museum heretics wanted to look at the artwork as a part of their own lives. To our knowledge an artifact in the museum represents – *pars pro toto* – the significance of a whole culture. In the opinion of the ‘aesthetic heretics’ separating it from the body of culture the artwork is losing his power and significance.

There is strong evidence that Hillebrand’s letters are the direct offshoot of Antoine Quatremère de Quincy’s *Letters to Miranda*.<sup>19</sup> Quatremère was one of the first who accused the widespread looting of art during the French Revolution and the following assemblage of thousands of objects in an universal museum of being a cultural disaster, and he could be called the founder of museum enmity. His seven fictive letters to General Miranda on the removal of art monuments from Italy were published in summer 1796 in Paris and appeared, still in the same year and slightly shortened, in German in the widely read Hamburg journal *Minerva*.<sup>20</sup>

These letters were a highlight in the published attacks on the lootings of the French troops in Italy following the spring of 1796.<sup>21</sup> Carl Ludwig Fernow corresponded from Rome beginning in May. In the August issue, inspired by Quatremère, the editor of the *Minerva* Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz wrote seven sorrowful

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**18** Cf. Francis Haskell, *Museums and Their Enemies*, in: *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 19/2 (1985), pp. 13–22; David Carrier, *Museum Skepticism. A History of the Display of Art in Public Galleries*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2006, pp. 51–73; James J. Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World. From the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 140–145; Joachimides 2001 (as in note 17), pp. 62–64. For further bibliography, see: Gaier 2013 (as in note 6), p. 222, note 332.

**19** Cf. Gaier 2013 (as in note 6), p. 170, p. 223, p. 231.

**20** Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, *Lettres à Miranda sur le déplacement des monuments de l’Art de l’Italie* [1796]. Introduction et notes par Édouard Pommier, Paris: Macula, 1989. See now the English edition in: Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, *Letters to Miranda and Canova on the Abduction of Antiquities from Rome and Athens*, introduction by Dominique Poulet, trans. by Chris Miller and David Gilks, Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012, pp. 93–123. For a German edition of letter 1–6 (*Minerva. Ein Journal historischen und politischen Inhalts*, ed. By Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz, 20/4 (1796), pp. 87–120, p. 271–309) see: Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, *Ueber den nachtheiligen Einfluss der Versetzung der Monumente aus Italien auf Künste und Wissenschaften*. Mit einer Einführung von Édouard Pommier, Stendal: Winckelmann-Gesellschaft, 1998, pp. 7–33.

**21** Bénédicte Savoy, *Kunstraub: Napoleons Konfiszierungen in Deutschland und die europäischen Folgen*, Vienna: Böhlau, 2011, pp. 205–206.

pages titled *Ueber die Verpflanzung großer Kunstwerke aus Italien nach Frankreich*.<sup>22</sup> The sixty-nine pages by the Frenchman, however, full of invective against art looters and general considerations on the question of ‘Who owned the art?’, raised the discussion to a new level and had an impact on it over a year.

Quatremère opposed, like Hillebrand later on, the democratization of art, when he warned about the “ignorant friends” for whom “the models of art are often nothing but objects of curiosity.”<sup>23</sup> And he also argues against the extradition of the artworks to “large stockpiles of models of art.”<sup>24</sup> But he is less concerned with the original purpose of the artworks, the problematic competition between them, or the saturation or even indifference of the eye than with the so-called ‘visible history of art’, arranged in the Louvre by Vivant Denon in a very comprehensive manner which fascinated so many visitors although they condemned the Napoleonic art theft.<sup>25</sup> This ‘visible history of art’ is, according to Quatremère, anemic and powerless, because the transplanted works of art are downgraded to historical objects and deprived of their original power.

For the German classicists, however, it was no obstacle to accept a resurrection of art at a different location. The same Carl Ludwig Fernow who condemned harshly the looting of Italy wrote to a friend in August 1796:

Would the more prudential, who discovers life even in death, not be hopeful that art one day will rise again to life on the Seine and there will flourish even more than in Rome, one would have to fall into despair about this desecration of Rome. [...] However, we hear extraordinarily good things about the facilities that are made in France for the housing of the Arts.<sup>26</sup>

Quatremère, in contrast, developed in his letters a theory of cultural heritage, writing that the preservation of the original context is crucial for the cultural and aesthetic force of the works.<sup>27</sup> It was shown that this theory, through Quatremère’s friendship with Antonio Canova, had significant influence on the development of the Italian Monument Protection Act of 1802.<sup>28</sup> But we should read this theory especially against

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<sup>22</sup> *Minerva* (as in note 20), 20/3 (1796), pp. 201–208. Cf. Savoy 2011 (as in note 21), p. 205; on Fernow *ibid.*, pp. 202–205.

<sup>23</sup> Quatremère de Quincy 2012 (as in note 20), p. 106 (Fourth Letter) and p. 115 (Sixth Letter).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110 (Fifth Letter).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre. Art, Politics and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

<sup>26</sup> Carl Ludwig Fernow, *Römische Briefe an Johann Pohrt 1793–1798*, ed. Herbert von Einem, Rudolf Pohrt, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1944, pp. 133–134 (22 August 1796).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Édouard Pommier, *Die Revolution in Frankreich und das Schicksal der antiken Kunstwerke*, in: Quatremère de Quincy 1998 (as in note 20), pp. 41–99; Dominique Poulot, *The Cosmopolitanism of Masterpieces*, in: Quatremère de Quincy 2012 (as in note 20), pp. 1–91.

<sup>28</sup> Antonio Pinelli, *Storia dell’arte e cultura della tutela*. Le “Lettres à Miranda” di Quatremère de Quincy, in: *Ricerche di storia dell’arte* 8 (1979), pp. 43–62.

the backdrop of the Napoleonic justification for art theft. The main argument of the looters was that the revolution freed the works of art of all bonds – religious and political bonds – and transferred them to a universally accessible temple of the liberal arts. They would also be liberated from the danger of being scattered to the four winds. This argument fell on particularly fertile ground abroad.

Fernow was among those who espoused the convenience of the modern museum. Indeed, his report of November 1797 still bore the ambiguous title *Italisches Ausleerungsgeschäft* (*Italian depletion affair*).<sup>29</sup> But the art lover in him already exulted “that the many large church paintings, which formerly in dark churches were nearly invisible, now may be situated in France so that we can easily look at them.”<sup>30</sup>

Quatremère’s strongest argument, however, was his prophetic vision of the museum as a shrine for relics on the one hand and for merchandise on the other.<sup>31</sup> He presages nations “treating these paradigms of beauty like so many bundles of goods”<sup>32</sup> that are “seen as jewels or diamonds that we enjoy merely for their monetary value.”<sup>33</sup> And he adds: “All collections want a Raphael, whether real or fake, just as every church once sought a piece of the True Cross. Unfortunately, the power of the whole is not transmitted – as it is with a relic – to each isolated fragment of a school of painting.”<sup>34</sup>

Instead, he is convinced that “the power of the whole” would be preserved only in Rome or Italy, with the city or country serving as a kind of ‘universal museum’:

You are too well informed to doubt that the surest means of destroying and killing a science is to disperse its elements and materials. If this is true, the decomposition of the museum of Rome would mean the death of all the forms of knowledge whose source is that museum’s unity.<sup>35</sup>

Beside the metaphor of Italy as a “general museum,”<sup>36</sup> Quatremère also writes in his letters of the dismemberment or mutilation of the ‘body of art’. In his third letter he writes:

It is a colossus from which limbs could be broken off and their fragments carried away, but its mass is one with the soil like the great Sphinx of Memphis. Attempting a partial transfer of this sort would be nothing short of a mutilation and as shaming as it would be fruitless to its perpetrators.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Carl Ludwig Fernow, *Italisches Ausleerungsgeschäft*, in: *Der neue Teutsche Merkur* 1 (1798), pp. 129–144.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Pommier 1998 (as in note 27), pp. 65–66.

<sup>32</sup> Quatremère de Quincy 2012 (as in note 20), p. 109 (Fifth Letter).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111 (Fifth Letter).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112 (Sixth Letter).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100 (Third Letter).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97 (Second Letter). See also p. 104 (Third Letter) and p. 108 (Fourth Letter).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101 (Third Letter).

Two years later, Johann Wolfgang Goethe – obviously aware of Quatremère’s viewpoint – wrote his famous *Einleitung in die ‘Propyläen’*. Here, he voted for a convenient inspection of the work of art instead of its close links to a certain location. Of course, Goethe conceded that all these “*Dislokationen*” were deplorable. But now he was not so much interested in the old “body of art” (*Kunstkörper*) than in the new one. And he wrote that it pleased him even more “in these times of distraction and loss” to concentrate on an “*ideal body of art*.”<sup>38</sup> The removal of the artworks “from their sacred places” meant to Goethe that art had to be found in a decidedly *aesthetic and imaginary* place instead of a religious one, “um dem Geschmack zu erstatten, was der Frömmigkeit entrissen war” (“to restitute to the taste what was taken from the piety”).<sup>39</sup>

## Taming the Body of Art

Thus the road to the modern museum as an ‘aesthetic church’ was founded. Friedrich Schlegel, in his *News from the paintings in Paris* of 1803, didn’t hesitate to criticize the Louvre as an “old, shapeless, and sad house” which was constructed “for despots without genius and education” and “not as a temple for the finest of the visual arts.”<sup>40</sup> But, like Goethe, he reversed Quatremère’s metaphors of dismemberment into a kind of taming of the body of art:

All artworks of one genre belong together, and they best explain themselves to each other. But how far dispersed are the members of this divine body? – Maybe not one person can vaunt that he has even seen everything important. And if there were one who had really seen all of it here and there, how could he put it together in clear and vivid presence in his mind?<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Einleitung in die ‘Propyläen’*, in: Id., *Ästhetische Schriften 1771–1805*, ed. Friedmar Apel (*Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, vol. 18), Frankfurt/M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998, pp. 457–475, p. 475.

<sup>39</sup> Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Ueber Kunst und Alterthum in den Rhein und Mayn Gegenden*. Erstes Heft, 1816, in: Id., *Ästhetische Schriften 1816–1820*, ed. Hendrik Birus (*Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, vol. 20), Frankfurt/M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1999, pp. 12–99, p. 19; Cf. Helmut J. Schneider, *Rom als klassischer Kunstkörper. Zu einer Figur der Antikewahrnehmung von Winckelmann bis Goethe*, in: Paolo Chiarini, Walter Hinderer (eds.), *Rom – Europa. Treffpunkt der Kulturen. 1780–1820*, Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2006, pp. 15–28, pp. 27–28; Johannes Grave, *Der “ideale Kunstkörper”. Johann Wolfgang Goethe als Sammler von Druckgraphiken und Zeichnungen*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006, p. 405, interprets Goethe’s “ideal body of art” as his collection of reproductions.

<sup>40</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, *Nachricht von den Gemälden in Paris*, in: *Europ.* 1 (1803), pp. 108–157, p. 108.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.



And he concludes: “Each new exhibition and compilation of old paintings creates a body of its own where several things will appear to the art lover in a new light, which he had not yet seen so clearly.”<sup>42</sup>

Quatremère, on the other hand, used the body metaphor to connote far more than just the idea of the ideal, imaginary whole and its parts, and also far more than just the pleasure of seeing the works in one place. It is, as he explains in his powerfully eloquent seventh and last *Letter to Miranda*,<sup>43</sup> especially the loss of the absorbing, provocative, rousing but also civilizing power of artworks that accompanies their decontextualization and dismemberment. With a visionary glance at the eclectic historicism, Quatremère here declares:

[...] that any study confined to these kinds of comparison also tends to neutralize taste, fuse character, and produce mixed genres, bastardized mannerisms, and styles without physiognomy; [...] that the diverse schools are only different dialects of the same pictorial language, whose spirit, accent, and nuance can only be acquired through habitual frequentation of that region. [...] that to fragment teaching, mutilate collections, and split up the galleries of Rome and Italy is to disperse rather than propagate enlightenment, to carve up education rather than broaden and extend it; it is not to transplant but to exile instruction; it is to cut off the branches of the tree rather than foster its growth; it is not, as some think, to disseminate the sources of life but, as in Egypt, to bury the limbs of [Osiris] in as many tombs as there are towns.<sup>44</sup>

What Quatremère meant with the last suggestion was the necessity of maintaining the integrity of the body of art in order to maintain its forces. Seth, after murdering Osiris, dismembered and buried his limbs at various locations in order to destroy his power.

In 1815, when Quatremère again published a moral essay on these problems, it seems that no one really listened to him anymore.<sup>45</sup> This was the year of the Treaty of Paris, which included the restitution of artworks that had been pillaged by France, and in many places officials had already begun to establish public art museums according to the model of the Louvre. But Quatremère again insists on the original meaning of the word ‘museum’ – home of the Muses – and on his opinion that artworks couldn’t be removed from that home without the loss of their greatest qualities. In this spirit, he reproached his fictive dialog partner:

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 111–112. For Schlegel’s concept of *Kunstkörper* cf. Hubert Locher, “Construction des Ganzen.” Friedrich Schlegels kritische Gänge durch das Museum, in: Johannes Grave, Hubert Locher, Reinhard Wegner (eds.), *Der Körper der Kunst. Konstruktionen der Totalität im Kunstdiskurs um 1800*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007, pp. 99–131.

<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, this letter was eliminated by Archenholz, the editor of *Minerva*, from his German edition.

<sup>44</sup> Quatremère de Quincy 2012 (as in note 20), p. 118 (Seventh Letter), with note 40 on p. 123.

<sup>45</sup> Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, *Considérations morales sur la destination des ouvrages de l’art [...]*, Paris: Crapelet, 1815.

Come on, don't say that the works of art in these depots remain what they were. Yes, you have transported them there materially, but did their convoy also retain the delicate, deep, melancholic, sublime, and touching feelings that surrounded them? Were you able to transfer to your magazines the ensemble of ideas and references that emanated such a lively interest from within these paintings and sculptures? All these objects have lost their effect with the loss of their motive.<sup>46</sup>

Whether we love to get lost in contemplation or in the crowd – even two hundred years later this fundamental criticism of the museum as an institution hasn't lost its relevance.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 56–57.